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**Evan T. Jones (ed.), 'Exchequer Decree to turn the Port of Cardiff into a member port of Bristol, 18 June 1567', The National Archives: Public Record Office, E123/3, fos. 191-2 (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2011)<sup>1</sup>**

*fo. 191r.*

xviii<sup>o</sup> die Juni.

Bristoll. /

Whereas divers compleyntes and Informacions hathe ben made and given to the righte honorable William marques of Winchester Lorde Treasurer of Englande,<sup>2</sup> Sir walter mildemay knighte Chauncellor and undertreasurer of this Courte<sup>3</sup> and the Barons of the same Courte aswell by the merchauntes of the Cyty and Porte of Bristoll As also by divers thinhabitauntes within the Citie of Gloucestre and others dwellinge at and abowte all the Creekes adioynynge to the Ryver of Severne<sup>4</sup> that the Quenes Customes Subsidies<sup>5</sup> and other duties due to her highnes for all wares and merchaundises aswell broughte and to be broughte into this Realme to the sayd porte and Creekes as also caried and to be caried owt from the same is greatly ~ decayed and like to decaye daylye yf spedye remedy in that behalf be not provided and had in her majesties behalf by reason and occacion that the lyke and the same Customes and Subsidies and other duties is not payed and aunswered to her highnes within and at any and every the sayd Creekes for the sayd wares and ~ ~ merchaundises there shipped or Landed as is in the sayd porte of Bristoll<sup>6</sup> whereupon after divers and many consultaciones and consideracions in the premisses by the sayd Threasurer<sup>7</sup> Chauncellor and Barons held, and the Recordes of this Courte to them shewed provynge that the Creeke of Chepstowe hath ben of olde tyme and oughte to be a member of the sayd Porte of Bristoll<sup>8</sup> and Subsidies and other duties there arrisinge hath ben aunswered by the Customers and ~ Collectors of the porte of Bristoll aforsayd And that tyme out of mynde there hathe bene and yet is one officer apperteyninge

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Margaret Condon (University of Bristol) for her advice and assistance on the transcription. The following conventions were employed when transcribing this document: the line spacing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation follow the manuscript; reconstructions of suspensions are in italics.

<sup>2</sup> William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester. Appointed Lord Treasurer in 1550 (d.1572).

<sup>3</sup> Sir Walter Mildmay. Appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1559 and under-treasurer of the Exchequer in January 1567 (d. 1589).

<sup>4</sup> The 'River of Severn' could be used to describe all of what would today be called the Severn Estuary. Indeed, in this document the term is stretched to include the eastern end of the Bristol Channel as far as Swansea.

<sup>5</sup> 'Subsidies': various forms of customs duties, such as 'tonnage' and 'poundage' were properly described as subsidies, in that they were granted by Parliament.

<sup>6</sup> The Crown did not collect customs in South Wales until 1564, when John Leek was appointed customer of the head port of Cardiff, the new port encompassing the whole coast from Chepstow to Swansea: W. R. B. Robinson, 'The Establishment of Royal Customs in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire under Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, XXIII, Part IV (1970). Given that all the Gloucestershire reaches of the Severn and its tributaries fell within the jurisdiction of the port of Bristol, the implication here is that lower duties were being charged in Wales than in Bristol. Those living with the jurisdiction of the port of Bristol claimed this to be detrimental to both the Queen and themselves – presumably because merchants were choosing to declare goods in the port of Cardiff, where the duties were lower, rather than at Bristol.

<sup>7</sup> 'Threasurer': Treasurer.

<sup>8</sup> Exchequer commissions of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century confirm that Chepstow had at that time been encompassed within the port of Bristol: E. M. Carus-Wilson & O. Coleman, *England's Export Trade, 1275-1547* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 178-9, 188-9.

to the sayd porte of Bristoll called the Clerke of the Creekes<sup>9</sup> ~ ~  
 adioyninge<sup>10</sup> to the Ryver of Severne And to thentent that the  
 Quenes highnes shalbe hereafter truly duly orderly and ~ ~  
 unyformely aunswered of her sayd Customes Subsidies and ~  
 other dueties within every the sayd Creekes in suche order forme  
 and sorte as her highnes is and hathe bene aunswered for the  
 like within the porte of Bristoll aforesayd accordinge to the ~  
 Statutes Lawes Customes and usages within this Realme  
 of Englande as Reason is And also for thavoydinge of all  
 contencions sutes and trobles whiche mighte arise and growe  
 by reason of the diversitie of Receptes and paymentes ~~of the~~  
 of the Customes Subsidies and other duties aforesayd and  
 for the quietnes of merchauntes resortinge or that shall *resorte*<sup>11</sup>  
 to any the sayd Creekes with any their wares *and merchaundises*  
 It is ordered and decreed the xviii<sup>th</sup> daye *of June in the ninth*  
 yere of the Reigne of our Sovereigne *Quene by the grace*  
 of god Quene of Englande *Ffraunce and defender*  
 of the faith & by the sayd Treasurer *Chauncellor and*  
 Barons that from hensforthe the Creekes *of Chepstowe*  
 Swansey Cardyff and all other Creekes *used as landing*

*fo. 191v.*

or discharginge places whatsoever havinge their passage  
 and water Course into the river of Severne or from the  
 same shalbe reputed taken accepted and used as members  
 and Creekes belonginge to the sayd porte of Bristoll and the  
 like Customes Subsidies and other duties hereafter to be due  
 to the Quenes majestie her heirs and Successors for the causes aforesaid  
 shalbe payed receaved and taken within every the sayd Creekes as  
 shalbe payde receaved and taken *within* the sayd Porte of Bristoll  
 for lyke wares and *merchaundises* there to be landed and discharged  
 and that all thofficers aswell for the Recepte of the sayd duties  
 and controullemente thereof as Serchers within every the sayd  
 Creekes and places shalbe deputies and substitutes to the ~  
 Customers or Collectors, Comptrollers and Sercher of the sayd  
 porte of Bristoll<sup>12</sup> And that all and every of the sayd deputies  
 and substitutes shall quarterly every yere certifie particulerly  
 in writinge under their handes to the sayd Customers ~ ~  
 Comptroller and Sercher within the sayd porte of Bristoll  
 every one of them to thofficer or officers under whome  
 he or they shall so serve all and every their several doinges ~  
 entries and receiptes<sup>13</sup> within every of the sayd Creekes within

<sup>9</sup> The 'clerk of the creeks', was the title given to a deputy of the searcher of Bristol responsible for the various pills and lading places upriver which were commonly used for river / coastal traffic: TNA:PRO, SP46/17 fo. 85v. The appointment to the office was by letters patent: *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1555-7, p. 257.

<sup>10</sup> 'adioyninge': adjoining.

<sup>11</sup> The bottom right corner of this folio has been ripped off. The italics at this point in the transcription thus represent a reconstruction. This can be determined with a fair degree of certainty, however, since the language used at this point is following standard formulas.

<sup>12</sup> Cardiff was thus to be a 'member port' of Bristol, rather than an independent head port. It was to charge the same duties that pertained at Bristol and the customs officers of Cardiff would become deputies to the customer, controller and searcher of Bristol.

<sup>13</sup> The officers of Cardiff were thus to submit to the head officers of Bristol records of the entries and receipts every three months.

the sayd quarter of a yere nexte before the sayd certificathe and also that the sayd deputies or substitutes under the sayd Customers or Collectors of Bristoll within every of the sayd Creekes shall from hensforthe every half yere<sup>14</sup> or within xiiij dayes nexte after the sayd half yere expired well and truly contente and pay or cause to be contented and payed unto the sayd Customers or Collectors all and every suche ~ somme and sommes of money as they or any of them shall or may receve for the Customes Subsidies and other ~ duties of and for all wares and merchaundises whiche within the sayd half yere shalbe within their severall charges shipped owtwarde or laide one Lande inwarde And that the sayd severall deputies or substitutes in their several charges shall make no cocket<sup>15</sup> or other discharge for any merchaunte for his goodes before they have received the Customes Subsidies and duties aforesayd or agreed for the same and to use or occupy no other Seales within their several charges but suche as the said officers of Bristoll shalbe privie unto with suche ~ ~ differences for every of the sayd Creekes as they may be perfectllie knownen and discerned from the like Seales of the Porte of Bristoll<sup>16</sup> And it is further ordered and decreed that the sayd severall deputies or substitutes from tyme to tyme ~ shall enter into sufficiente bonde or bondes to the hed officer or officers of the porte of Bristoll for the tyme beinge under whom he or they shall serve for the true observeinge and ~ ~ aunseringe of so muche of this order and decree as to hym

*fo. 192r.*

or them shall appertyene and belonge<sup>17</sup> And that the sayd hed officers of the porte of Bristoll shall not directe any ~ warraunte<sup>18</sup> to the sayd Clerke of the Creekes or his deputies ~ under their Seales of office, the sayd warraunte to be particularly made at the lenth<sup>19</sup> and that ~~that~~ the sayd Clerke of the Creekes or his deputies shall not onely from tyme to tyme certifie the sayd officers of the porte of Bristoll as his or their severall doynge to his office apperteyning in writinge under his Seale of office but also for the better and more perfecte ~ aunsweringe of the quenes sayd Customes Subsidies and other duties, and for the better Comptrolmente of the sayd officers and the sayd Clerke of the Creekes shall yerelye in michaelmas terme cetifie and deliver unto this Courte

<sup>14</sup> 'every half yere' – i.e. at Michaelmas (29 September) and Easter.

<sup>15</sup> 'cocket' – a customs certificate recording the payment of customs, or granting permission for coastal shipment.

<sup>16</sup> The customs officers of each member port were thus to have separate seal, that was known to the customs officers of Bristol and readily identifiable, so that anyone checking the seal on a cocket could tell where it had been issued.

<sup>17</sup> The customs officers in Wales were thus to take out bonds with the head officers of Bristol as a guarantee of their good behaviour. If they misbehaved in office they would thus loose the sum of money stipulated in the bond.

<sup>18</sup> Warrants were often granted by customs officers to permit an irregular practice, such as the lading or unlading of goods at a place where it was not normally permitted.

<sup>19</sup> 'at the lenth': at the length – i.e. in full / without curtailment. In other words, if warrants were issued they were to be written out in full.

one *particuler booke*<sup>20</sup> signed with his hande makinge ~  
mention of all the sayd Cockettes that shalbe to hym ~ ~  
directed for any cause within one hole yere nexte before  
the feaste of St michael tharchaungell<sup>21</sup> before the same  
certificate so to be made as afore sayde with the names  
and burdens of every shipp boate or other vessell that  
shall passe in or out of his sayd office and all other  
thinges to his sayd office appertyninge duringe the tyme  
he shall continue in the office aforesayd./

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<sup>20</sup> 'Particular books' were the detailed records, submitted to the Exchequer, of goods passing in or out of the country.

<sup>21</sup> 'the feaste of St michael tharchaungell' – i.e. Michaelmas (29 September).